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nish material for fermentation; but, besides their production, knowledge of the potter's craft was needed, as no drink could be brewed without large vessels in which to store the material. Thus we learn that all savages knew the use of alcohol before they came in contact with so-called civilisation, except the few pre-agricultural aborigines of Australia, who made no pottery. Hops were a very late addition in the history of alcohol, and were unknown before the fourteenth century, when spirits were also for the first time distilled.

Originally drunkenness appears to have been spasmodic only and was mostly confined to religious festivals. This may account for the ancient conception of Paradise as a place of refreshing largely connected with liquor. Homer's Olympus consisted of an "everlasting drunken orgy," we are told, and the Scandinavian Valhalla was built on rather similar lines.

On the whole the tone of this whole book is wise and moderate, the horrible and undeniable results of intemperance are clearly put forth, and the question is asked, in reasonable terms, what, under any circumstances, are the benefits of alcohol. Yet we are definitely told by one writer that "the idea of making a nation of total abstainers is not feasible, even if it were really desirable, and by another that "warnings against strong drinks are at least as old as the art of writing itself." The outlook would be rather a black one, were we not convinced that a strong individual desire for sobriety is the only basis for a really temperate national life.

RUTH HEAD.

London, England.

THE ADORNMENT OF THE SPIRITUAL MARRIAGE, THE BOOK OF TRUTH, THE SPARKLING STONE. By Jan van Ruysbroeck. Translated into English from the original Flemish by C. A. Wynschenck Dom. Edited, with an introduction by Evelyn Underhill. London: J. M. Dent & Sons, Ltd., 1916. Pp. xxxii, 259. Price, 4s. 6d. net.

The ever-widening circle of those who study the life of the spirit will be grateful to the translator for this excellent rendering into English of three of the finest writings of Jan of Ruysbroeck, which have never been fully accessible in our own language. M. Maeterlinck has indeed given us extracts from them in his well known essay translated by Miss Jane Stoddart, and Miss

Underhill has quoted largely from them in her most excellent monograph in the *Quest* series; otherwise all we possess of direct translation is the short and difficult treatise *The Book of the Twelve Beguines*, done into English by Mr. John Francis. The standard text of Ruysbroeck is of course the French translation by the Benedictines of St. Paul de Wisques. It is difficult to account for this apparent neglect, as Jan of Ruysbroeck was certainly one of the greatest of the Christian mystics. His influence was felt far beyond his own age and country, and had its share in the emancipation of the human mind in the Reformation. Miss Underhill, in an admirable preface, touches on his life and times, and sums up his teaching with great clearness and insight. She disposes of the notion (popularised by M. Maeterlinck) that Ruysbroeck was an "ignorant monk," and shows that he was familiar with the works not only of the early Christian authors, but of Plato, Aristotle, and Plotinus.

Up to his day Christian writings had chiefly taken the form of scholastic speculation, but now came a demand for a religion of experience, more simple, practical and social. With his foundations firmly rooted in Catholicism (he himself declares that he submits all he has written to the judgment of Holy Church) Ruysbroeck was yet one of the great constructive mystics who represent and sum up the spiritual knowledge of their own and other times, transfusing and co-ordinating, in the light of their own rich experience and personality, the universal vision of God, and of man's relation to Him. As the Greek bishop has well said: "Our systems (of religion) are like walls to protect us against the storms of the world, but above they are all open to the same God." It is to this universal and rarefied atmosphere that Ruysbroeck lifts us, interpreting and vivifying the doctrines of the Catholic faith till they form what he himself calls "a sparkling stone" capable of reflecting the radiance of the Uncreated Light.

The Christian life he tells us is useless without the power of rest and of action. In *The Adornment of the Spiritual Marriage* when "Christ our faithful Bridegroom united our nature with His person," he treats of the active life and of the necessity for moral training, before treating of spiritual training. Like many of the spiritual thinkers of those days, he speaks much of the "spiritual ladder" or three stages of development. The first stage is the active life of the servants of God, moral and

virtuous. The second stage or inward life of the friends of God, is marked by a change of intention. All is now done from the motive of love "when Christ the Eternal Sun rises in our hearts and sends his light and fire into our wills." The third stage is the superessential life of the sons of God "who have raised themselves into the absolute purity of their spirit by love, and stand in God's presence with open and unveiled faces."

The *Book of the Sparkling Stone* is perhaps the finest and most inspired of all his writings, and that in which he reaches the greatest heights. Man is given the Sparkling Stone or Nature of Christ, the goal of human transcendence.

In the *Book of Supreme Truth* he reviews some of his teachings, combats the pantheistic and quietist doctrines preached by some of the heretical sects of his day, and makes clear that "as the air is in the sunshine and the sunshine in the air, so God is the being of the soul but the Creator always distinct from the created."

The translator has done a great service in opening out to us the experience and teachings of one of the most lofty and spiritual minds of the Christian era. The English is excellent and shows no trace of the original involved Flemish or rather Brabant dialect in which Ruysbroeck himself wrote.

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SHORTER NOTICES.

A MANUAL OF MODERN SCHOLASTIC PHILOSOPHY. By Cardinal Mercier and other professors of the Higher Institute of Philosophy, Louvain. Authorized translation by T. L. Parker, M.A., and S. A. Parker, O.S.B., M.A.; with a preface by P. Coffey, Ph.D., Professor of Philosophy at Maynooth College, Ireland. Vol. I. London, Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Company; St. Louis, B. Herder, 1916. Pp. xxvi, 573. Price, 10s. 6d. net.

This work, which will be complete in two volumes, is in large part an abridgment of the well-known Louvain philosophical series, six volumes of which had appeared before the beginning of the war. The present work includes, besides a prefatory introduction to philosophy, Cosmology (by D. Nys), Psychology, Criteriology (Epistemology), and Ontology by Cardinal Mercier. The second volume will contain Natural Theology, Logic, Ethics and History of Philosophy.

No student of contemporary philosophy can afford to neglect the neo-scholastic movement since 1879. Great efforts have been made to bring the teaching of Aquinas up to date, and, as in Walker's *Theory of Knowledge*, the non-Romanist philosopher will find his colleagues recognised and dealt with. The "Manual" is decorated with four physiological plates, and Evolution receives five pages. Physical theories, which are divided